

## SOUTHEASTERN SOIL HEALTH FIELD DAY

Overcast skies and cool temperatures didn't hamper the Southeastern Soil Health Field Day held at Fork L Farm in Norwood on April 29. Approximately 100 attendees from Virginia, North and South Carolina rotated between three different twenty minute break-out sessions as they gleaned information from soil experts.

Jay Fuhrer, a Soil Health Specialist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Bismarck, North Dakota, lead the session on cover crops biology and diversity.



"Big guys eat the little guys," he stated as he explained mineralization, the process of breaking down crop residues to useable organic material that can be used by other plants."

**Jay Furher**

The soil specialist also described the carbon cycle and how it goes from the atmosphere to plants and then to the soil, then respire back into the atmosphere.

Fuhrer said, "Soil gets dark when you accumulate carbon."

Dr. Matthew Poore, an Extension Livestock Commodity Coordinator Professor and Extension Ruminant Nutrition Specialist, conducted the session on rotational grazing mixed species.



"Interest in grazing management is increasing rapidly. Amazing things happen when you realize the importance of pasture to livestock production,"

**Dr. Matthew Poore**

The Amazing Grazing Program is dedicated to providing NC livestock producers with timely information about pasture systems for beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, goats, horses, swine, and poultry. Appropriate pasture management leads to lower fuel, fertilizer and equipment costs, calmer, cleaner, healthier animals and improved soil and water conservation. For more information, go to <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/researchunits/amazing-grazing.html>.

Nathan Lowder, NRCS District Conservationist, held the session on plot trials and equipment comparisons. In his field demonstration he discussed the 3 types of planter configurations that are used to plant no-till crops in heavy cover crop residue. Two rows used row cleaners each in a different configuration and one row was standard no-till. Discussion was to point out ways to manage residue to allow successful planting of annual crops.



"We want to enable the successful placement of seed while keeping all this residue in place to conserve moisture, provide weed suppression, and prevent erosion."

**Nathan Lowder**

The afternoon concluded with a question and answer session and door prizes. Door prizes were donated by Cody Strawberry Farm, Muddy Boots Farms, Uwharrie Bank, Stanly County Farm Bureau, and George's Plant Farm.

Sponsors for the Southeastern Soil Health Field Day included Stanly County Farm Bureau, Uwharrie Bank, and King's AgriSeeds.